
Security Assistance Training at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College: A Good News Story

By

**Lieutenant Colonel Pat Madden, U.S. Army
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College**

The following story describes how going the extra mile and working together can have a significant, positive impact on the international military student and his family. It also highlights how various private and government organizations can work together in a spirit of cooperation and goodwill.

The story involves a military officer from Uzbekistan named Ilkhomjon Toornsunov and his son Timur. Major Toornsunov, the first officer from Uzbekistan ever to attend Command and General Staff College (CGSC), was here studying for one year and was authorized on his Invitational Travel Orders to have his family accompany him during his studies. However, the arrival of his wife and family in the U.S. had been delayed. Before the arrival of his family at Fort Leavenworth, Major Toornsunov was discussing his family's absence with Lieutenant Colonel Pat Madden, Chief of the International Officer Student Division at CGSC, and mentioned that one of his two sons, Timur, had a hearing problem that needed medical attention.

Coincidentally, about the same time, Ellen Miles, a civilian sponsor of Major Toorsunov, informed Madden that a private voluntary organization called Heart to Heart International, which specialized in medical humanitarian support, was en route to Toorsunov's country on a medical support mission. Heart to Heart was well known by CGSC since they participate as volunteer advisers during part of the curriculum dealing with humanitarian relief and peacekeeping operations. Through a series of timely phone calls and email, Dr. Gary Morsch, President of Heart to Heart International, was contacted and agreed to try to locate the Toornsunov family and examine the boy. Amazingly Dr. Morsch and his colleagues did locate the family and their team of four doctors examined the boy. Dr. Morsch reported to LTC Madden that the boy did have a hearing loss and would need sophisticated testing, diagnosis and treatment to correct the problem. It was now known that if the boy was not treated he could suffer permanent hearing loss. Thus, when the family arrived in the U.S., Major Toorsunov would be faced with finding medical treatment for his son.

Upon learning this news LTC Madden then contacted Bill Venzke who is the security assistance program manager at U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) and Vern Smith, the country program manager at the Security Assistance Training Field Activity at Fort Monroe and asked for assistance in expediting the move of the family to the U.S. They in turn contacted LTC Yip DeLong, assistant military attaché in the U.S. embassy in Tashkent, who had worked extensively in this region of the world and was experienced with the language and culture. Lieutenant Colonel DeLong was able to expedite the family's departure and send them on their way to the U.S. After many weeks of separation, Timur, his mother and brother were now on their way to Fort Leavenworth.



Zulfia and Ilkhomjon Toorsunov with their children Timur and Bunyod from Uzbekistan with Lieutenant Colonel Pat Madden and his wife, Lisa, from U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.

On 6 November 1999, Major Toorsunov's family arrived in the U.S.A. The following week Timur was seen by Dr. Thedinger, an ear, nose and throat doctor who specialized in ear problems and just happened to be working at the local health facility in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. After a series of exams and tests it was determined that Timur's hearing could be corrected by inserting ear tubes. On 26 January 2000, surgery was performed on Timur's ears. Very rapidly Timur's hearing began to recover. One evening soon after the surgery Major Toorsunov contacted LTC Madden and excitedly exclaimed that for the first time his son was attempting to speak and was responding to his parents. After several follow up medical visits it was determined that Timur would be able to hear without further surgery or hearing aids. It was also estimated that with speech therapy, Timur would probably lead a normal healthy life. The local Ft. Leavenworth public school was able to enroll Timur in speech therapy, which he took until his father graduated in June 2000.

You can imagine the significant impact this made on Major and Mrs. Toorsunov. They told us over and over how they will never forget the kindness and helpfulness they have experienced from the United States. They knew that without our help their son would never have led a normal

life. We knew that without the many different players from all walks of life and professions this story would not have had a happy ending. One of the stated goals of the security assistance training program is to “promote better understanding of the United States, its people, political system, institutions, and way of life.” There is no doubt the Toorsnov family not only met this goal but will always remember the United States with great fondness and appreciation.

About the Author

Lieutenant Colonel Patrick M. Madden is the Chief of the International Officer Student Division at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. He is a 1993 graduate of Command and General Staff College and holds a Master of Science in strategic intelligence from the Joint Intelligence College as well as a Bachelor of Arts in international studies from Whitworth College.